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## **Congressman Boyd Works To Bring North Florida Soldiers Home**

WASHINGTON, DC: Today, Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida) sent the following letter to Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee and General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. This letter is in response to the Army announcing that Reserve and National Guard units will be stationed in Iraq for a one year tour of duty, including those units which have already been serving in Iraq for several months.

“I would like to express my strenuous opposition to the Army's new rotation plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom, which calls for units that are currently stationed in Iraq to remain there for up to one year.

“As you may know, soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Battalion, 124 Infantry Brigade have participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom from the beginning, and were attached to the 3rd Infantry Division when it took Baghdad earlier this year. While the active duty components of the 3rd Infantry Division have all rotated home, the 3rd Infantry Battalion has been informed that it will remain in Iraq until at least March of 2004. This has caused considerable frustration for many families who cannot understand why reserve units are being left in place overseas while the active duty units they are attached to are being rotated back to the continental United States.

“With this announcement, the unit has now received at least three different dates for returning home and this constant uncertainty has had a very negative impact on morale within the unit and on their family members. While I want to ensure that military commanders in the field have the troops necessary to help the Iraqi people establish a new government, I also believe that the Army has failed to take into consideration the impact this decision will have on the families of the many

National Guard personnel from North Florida who are still in Iraq.

“As the Member of Congress who represents the vast majority of the personnel in the 3rd Infantry Battalion, I urge you to reconsider this decision and to treat National Guard units the same way that the Army has treated the active duty units to which they were attached during the conflict.”